

Chapter 4: Natural Disasters

B. Hurricanes

With the advancement of modern detection tracking devices, it is now possible for the National Weather Service to provide between 12 to 24 hours advance warning before the hurricane hits the land. Even with this information, a hurricane can often take unexpected turns. Therefore, it is important to take the necessary precautions in advance.

A "hurricane watch" is issued whenever a hurricane becomes a threat to coastal areas. Precautionary actions should be taken as soon as a "hurricane warning" is issued. This occurs when winds are 74 miles per hour or higher, or when a combination of rough seas and high water are expected. The following are precautionary measures to be taken in the event of a hurricane:

1. Listen to local radio or television reports for the latest information.
2. Check battery-powered equipment: radios, flashlights, emergency lighting, etc.
3. Check recovery kit (see chapter 5).
4. Where possible, remove books, papers, etc. from vulnerable areas near windows.
5. Board up windows or protect them with tape. Although tape may not keep a window from breaking, it can prevent flying glass.
6. Have telephone trees available to notify staff if building is closed prior to event.
7. If advised to do so, evacuate area.
8. Be aware of tornado watches and warnings, as tornadoes are often spawned by hurricanes. During a tornado, stay away from windows. Go into a restroom without windows or a basement or closet.
9. Remain indoors during the hurricane.